

found to exhibit a very strong emission band at $4.75\text{ }\mu$. The emission spectrum of $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{OH}$ shows that a vapour in a vacuum tube can emit a continuous spectrum.

Ångström's conclusions—deduced from the fact that the total radiation *increases*, while the luminous radiation *decreases*, with increase of pressure in the gas—that there are two kinds of radiation present during the electrical discharge are found to be in close agreement with the observed facts. These different discharges were named "regular" and "irregular" (*i.e.* luminescence) by the previous observer. An interesting theoretical discussion of the action of pressure in this connection is given in the volume.

W. E. R.

DISEASES OF VINES.¹

TWO parts of the *Annales de l'Institut Central Ampélogique Royal Hongrois*, devoted to two of the vine diseases, have lately reached us.

In one of these parts (part iii.) an account is given of the little known disease caused by the attacks of *Phyllosticta Bizzozeriana*. The disease was first noticed in the year 1900, and it has been kept under observation since then, with the result that its spread has been traced in some detail. The symptoms are somewhat similar to those of the dreaded "black-rot," but it does not appear as if it will prove so dangerous a parasite. In addition to a brief life-history of the fungus, illustrated by an excellent plate, a useful compendium of the species of *Phyllosticta* occurring on the vine is given.

Part iv. contains an unusually complete account of the "grey-rot" caused by *Botrytis cinerea*. This is one of the parasites of the vine which the cultivator most dreads. All aerial parts of the host-plant are attacked indiscriminately, and quickly become covered with a greyish or brown mould, which produces enormous quantities of ashy-grey spores. This stage is succeeded by the formation of small black sclerotia in the diseased tissues of the stems, leaves, and fruits. Naturally the fungus has been investigated time after time, but the researches of Istvanffy, published in this volume, have added a number of fresh facts to our knowledge of its life-history. In the first place, a series of laboratory investigations was made with the object of determining the conditions under which the fungus brought about the infection of the host-plant. The optimum temperature for the germination of the spores proved to be 25° C. , whilst the spores were killed by exposure to a temperature of 38° C. to 41° C. The effects of drying the spores were then investigated. One day's drying over sulphuric acid at laboratory temperatures, either in light or darkness, was sufficient to kill 75 per cent. of the spores, and desiccation for thirty-six days was fatal to all of them. Spores previously germinated and exposed to this treatment suffered still more severely. The results of freezing were again seriously to diminish their germinating capacity.

The action of a number of the commoner fungicides on spores was then examined, with interesting results. Thus a 1 per cent. solution of Bordeaux mixture only prevented the germination of some 60 per cent., and a 10 per cent. solution about 10 per cent. Spores which were allowed to dry after soaking in Bordeaux mixture all failed to germinate. Others sown in drops on the foliage of the host-plant not only germinated, but infected the tissues below them. On examining the action of the constituents of this mixture, lime water proved to be singularly efficacious in preventing germination.

In the majority of these experiments the spores of *Monilia* and of *Coniothyrium* were exposed to the same conditions, with results, on the whole, similar to those already quoted. At the same time, the life-history of the fungus was traced in detail. Istvanffy succeeded in germinating the sclerotia, and has settled the point once for all that they do give rise to the apothecia of *Sclerotinia fuckeliana*. So many observers have failed to obtain this ascigerous stage that it is well to have this definite statement. The sclerotia retain their germinating capacity for at least twenty-one months. Another interesting point

¹ "Annales de l'Institut Central Ampélogique Royal Hongrois," tome iii., livres 3 and 4, 1905. (Budapest, 1905.)

brought out in the course of this research is that the well known adpressoria of the fungus are the early stages in the development of the sclerotia. In addition to the microconidia observed by Brefeld and others, Istvanffy records the production of an oidal stage.

For further details, and for methods to be adopted for checking the spread of this pest, the original must be consulted. It is full of points of interest to the student of plant pathology, and makes one regret more and more that this country possesses no institute similar to the Central Ampélogique Royal Hongrois, where the pressing problems of plant disease can be adequately examined. Here we have to trust to the private individual for what investigations are made, and he all too rarely has opportunities to make them on the comprehensive scale possible at such an institution.

EARTHQUAKE ORIGINS.

AMONG the most interesting and important of the new ideas, which have been introduced into seismology, in late years, must be classed Major E. G. Harboe's notion of the nature of earthquake origins. Originally treated as a point, the focus of an earthquake has long been recognised as an area, but we are still in the habit of regarding it as restricted in size and small in comparison with the dimensions of the area over which the earthquake is felt. On this hypothesis the decrease in violence is correlated with increase in distance, and due to a gradual diminution of intensity as the disturbance travels from its origin; according to Major Harboe's conception, the focus of an earthquake is no longer restricted in size, but ramifies, with a varying degree of initial violence, over nearly the whole of the seismic area.

On the generally accepted hypothesis the coseismal lines should more or less correspond with the isoseismal, a decrease in violence being accompanied by an increase of time interval, but such is far from being the case, and we have been in the habit of attributing the irregularities to errors of observation; Major Harboe has now shown that another explanation is possible, and that the irregularities in recorded times almost disappear if his hypothesis of the nature of the origin is adopted. From the discussion of the records of earthquakes he reaches the conclusion that the true rate of propagation of the sensible shock is about 0.4 kilometre per second, the higher velocities obtained by other investigators being compounded of the rate of propagation of the disturbance along the origin, and that of the wave-motion set up by this disturbance.

This rate of propagation is that of the sensible shock, which can be felt by human beings, and not that of the large waves recorded by seismographs outside the seismic area proper; the latter, the rate of propagation of which is about 3 kilometres per second, are regarded as different in character, and propagated in the consolidated rock at some little depth below the surface, the sensible shock being due to quite superficial waves propagated through the more fissured and less coherent surface rocks.

One of the weightiest of the objections to this hypothesis was the value of 3.28 ± 0.05 km. sec. obtained by Profs. Sekiya and Omori in 1902 from the seismic triangulation started by Prof. Milne in 1884. This is dealt with in vol. viii., part iii., of Gerland's *Beiträge zur Geophysik*, where Major Harboe remarks that, in spite of the long period over which the observations extended, only four earthquakes seem to have given usable records from all the stations, three earthquakes at three stations, and one at two stations. Taking two of these earthquakes, for which records from a number of meteorological observatories have been published, he finds that the velocity and direction of propagation, deduced from the triangulation, lead to most discordant results at other stations, irregularities which disappear if a branch of the origin is supposed to have traversed the field of triangulation and the disturbance to have spread outwards to the stations.

Whether the hypothesis stands the test of future investigation or not, it seems to explain many previously inexplicable anomalies, apart from those of time. It appears to work out satisfactorily in the case of those earthquakes by which Major Harboe has attempted to test

it, but the only true testing must be left to investigators of the future, for it is to be feared that in the past seismologists have been inclined to reject, as bad, all records of time which failed to fit in with their preconceived ideas of the direction of propagation of the shock, though they might have fitted in with a less simple, though possibly truer, conception of the form and extent of the earthquake origin.

R. D. OLDHAM.

CURRENTS IN THE STRAITS OF MESSINA.

FOR our knowledge of the physical conditions at the bottom of the sea we are very largely beholden to the enterprise of submarine cable companies; indeed, it is difficult to imagine a more thoroughly satisfactory method of survey than that employed by them. Duties connected with the maintenance of cables have led to the discovery of details in the configuration of submarine gullies, of fresh-water outlets beneath the sea, and of alterations in the bed of the ocean itself, which would otherwise have eluded observation. Prof. Platania, of the Istituto Nautico of Catania, has directed attention to another rather surprising fact, namely, that in the Straits of Messina there are deep-water currents of sufficient velocity to cause the interruption of the cables joining Sicily with the mainland ("I cavi telegrafici e le correnti sottomarine nello stretto di Messina," reprinted from the *Atti della R. Accademia Peloritana*, vol. xx.). The period under observation covers the last forty years, during which time there have been twenty-six interruptions; neglecting two, nineteen occurred between November and April, and five between May and October. The strong currents cause a continual attrition by sand and pebbles. The rocks on the sea bottom are swept free of mud and sand, and their rough surfaces, thus exposed, have worn out the cables lying upon them. In one case a cable seems to have been corroded by a sulphurous spring. The surface currents attain a speed of five miles an hour. They have always been a danger to navigation, and the wrecks of two large vessels which were lying last summer upon the Sicilian shore show that Scylla and Charybdis have lost none of their power. The existence of correlated strong deep-water currents had been suspected. Biologists have long been attracted to Messina by the plentiful harvest of deep-sea animals which are occasionally brought up to the surface by a vast turmoil of waters, thus affording almost unique opportunities. M. Thoulet and others have repeated the classical experiments of our countryman, Captain Richard Bolland, made in 1675 in the Straits of Gibraltar, and have demonstrated the existence, at twenty fathoms, of an undercurrent flowing in a contrary direction to that on the surface, but these currents have not yet been as systematically studied as the importance of the subject demands. The tides, as is frequently the case in narrow straits, as, for instance, inside the Isle of Wight, are doubled.

A PERIODICAL FOR PALÆONTOLOGISTS.

THIS new venture in scientific literature,¹ which is to appear quarterly, and leads off with a double number, will be warmly welcomed by all palæontologists, for since the "Annales des Sciences Géologiques" ceased to exist, there has been no accredited journal for palæontology in France. The "Annales des Sciences Naturelles: Zoologie," it is true, has on occasion offered the hospitality of its pages, but the whole of its space is not too great for the living subject.

Material enough and to spare lies ready to hand at the Paris Museum in collections from all parts of France and its colonies, while it is further intended to carry on D'Orbigny's incomplete tasks begun in his "Paleontologie Française" and "Prodrome de Paléontologie stratigraphique universelle." The publication of illustrations of the yet unfigured types of the latter work, with reprints of the author's diagnoses, accompanied by notes and ex-

¹ "Annales de Paléontologie, publiées sous la direction de Marcellin Boule." Tome i. fasc. 1 and 2, January, 1906. Pp. xi+100; 9 plates. (Paris: Masson et Cie.)

planations, an undertaking of great merit, is begun in this first part.

As regards guiding principles, the editor, while not wishing in any way to dictate to his contributors, gently suggests in his introduction that he has preferences. On the one hand, he seeks memoirs on stratigraphical or purely systematic palæontology, in which the principal object will not be the multiplication of genera and species, holding as he does that *mieux valent des choses sans noms que des noms sans choses*. On the other, he inclines to papers having a philosophic bearing.

With his former predilection all must be in accord, while of the latter, the very first paper, one by the veteran Albert Gaudry, "Fossiles de Patagonie. Les attitudes de quelques Animaux," is an excellent example, where "attitudes" is used to express the comparative bearing, gait, and appearance, and not posture alone. The author points out that in Tertiary times in Patagonia Plantigrades and Rectigrades predominated over Digitigrades.

The editor and M. A. Thevenin give the first instalment of a series of memoirs on the palæontology of Madagascar, in which they deal with the molluscan fauna from newly discovered Upper Cretaceous beds on the eastern side of the island. Some of the species enumerated are identical with those found by the Rev. R. Baron in the northern and north-western districts, that were described by Mr. R. B. Newton in the Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc. for 1889 and 1895, a fact to which, however, allusion is not made. This fauna presents considerable analogy with that which lived during the same epoch in India.

The second contribution to the same series, by M. Douville, treats of some nummulitic beds in Madagascar.

M. Boule adds a memoir on "Les grands Chats des Cavernes," principally the lion, that takes the form of a popular review of current knowledge on the subject.

The part concludes with the opening portion of the descriptions and figures of D'Orbigny's types already referred to.

Altogether there are 100 pages of text, with nine phototype plates, besides abundant illustrations in the text, all the figures being most excellent, and veritable works of art.

There is, indeed, but one objection to raise, and that is against the adoption of dual pagination, each paper having its distinct pagination in addition to that of the volume, because the disadvantages of this system for purposes of citation far outweigh any possible benefits.

It is to be hoped that the glossy surfaced paper selected, so suitable for modern text illustrations, though not for type of the face employed, is not of that perishable description which we have been lately warned will deprive future generations of the fruits of our intellectual labours.

B. B. W.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

CAMBRIDGE.—The special board for mathematics has put forward new proposals, both with regard to the mathematical tripos and the mechanical sciences tripos, which involve far-reaching changes. The first-named report points out that in the opinion of the special board the existing mathematical tripos is unsatisfactory as an examination. The special board proposes to substitute for the present part i. a new part i., which may be taken by a student either at the end of his first or second year. Part i. will not qualify for a degree without further examination. It is hoped that this part will be taken by many who propose to proceed later to study engineering or natural sciences. The board further proposes that for the existing part ii. a new part ii. be established, which must be taken at the end of the third year. The position of senior wrangler is abolished, but the class list of each part will contain three classes, the names in each class being arranged alphabetically. Schedules are published for each of the proposed new parts.

With regard to the report of the mechanical sciences tripos, the special board of mathematics suggests that part ii. of the tripos should be abolished, and it is proposed to modify part i. by the inclusion of a number of